



YOUR BOOK AND MINE

BY WILLIAM M. SANISTER



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YOUR BOOK AND MINE



Margaret E. Sangster

YOUR BOOK AND MINE

BY

MARGARET E. SANGSTER

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DEDICATION

To my pen-and-ink friends — and to those who, though they have never written to me, perhaps, are also my friends!

NOTE

Some of the verses in this book have been reprinted from *The Christian Herald*, *The Saturday Evening Post*, *The New York Sun*, *Scribner's*, *The Elks Magazine*, and the *Argosy-All Story*. To these magazines the author wishes to give acknowledgement, and thanks.

Preface

This volume, which I have called, "Your Book and Mine" was compiled especially for those pen-and-ink friends who, through their encouragement and counsel and affection, have made all of my working hours so pleasant. The following pages are sweet, to me, with thoughts of the ones for whom they were bound together.

Just nine articles, from *The Christian Herald*, have been included in this book. They are the articles which have inspired the largest number of letters from my readers—for I have tried to keep a careful count of such letters. The verses have been gathered from various magazines, some of them are newly written, and some of them are the ones that members of *The Christian Herald* family have loved.

"Your Book and Mine" is divided into three parts. The first part I think of as the "happy part"—for in it I have placed the bits of writing that folk have, through letters, told me that they enjoyed. The second part might be called inspirational or thoughtful or helpful—what you will! For it holds the fragments that have, according to my friends, carried the stuff of dreams to lonely hearts. And the last part is made up of those things that I hope have brought a ray of light into some shadowy place—that have perhaps given comfort.

I hope that you, my friends, will like "Your Book and Mine." For I cannot help feeling that it belongs more—oh, so much more—to you than it does to me!

MARGARET E. SANGSTER.

New York City.

YOUR BOOK AND MINE

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Where sunlight is, and kindness is,
Where spring is oft returning,
Where every cottage shows the gleam
Of vivid hearth fires burning.
Where children laugh, and flowers bloom,
And envy enters never,
There friendship dwells, and happiness
Lives there forever!

THE RETURNING

THE RETURNING

The little girl I used to be
Came back to call, today ;
Her chubby little knees were scratched,
Her blue hair ribbons weren't matched,
Yet, watching her, I seemed to see
Deep in her eyes of gray—
A spark of something that has grown
Into the heart of me.

She seemed at first a small unknown,
We had few words to say—
We tried to laugh and chat, but we
Were centuries away,
Until her fingers touched my hand,
And, over mists of years,
I knew that she could understand,
And smiled at her, through tears!

And then we talked of many things,
Of dreams we used to know ;
I told her that grown-up land brings
A challenge to the heart that sings—
She told me, mousy-low,
Her pursed-up mouth against my ear,
About her doll, of all most dear,
That we had loved and laid away
When we had grown too big to play!

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The little girl I used to be,
Came back to call, today;
Her smile was wide and very glad,
And yet her eyes were almost sad—
Perhaps because of me!
For I sit at a desk and write,
And seldom watch the firelight
For pictures, any more—
I do not wonder, when it's dark,
If bears and woolly dogs that bark,
Lurk just behind the door. . . .

Her chubby little knees were scratched,
Her blue hair ribbons weren't matched,
My blouse was new and neat—
And, oh, I saw the eyes of her,
Watching, through just a little blur,
My skirt, 'most to my feet!

I wonder can she ever know,
Or ever really see—
The spark of her that, like a glow,
Lights all the soul of me?

Rainy-Weather Clothes

It was a rainy day—a rainy day *plus!* The weather was so very inclement that the word rainy didn't describe it at all. The rain fell in veritable sheets of gray water; a heavy wind, slashing down the side streets, was doing as much damage to umbrellas and dresses and awnings as possible. It was a good day to stay in the house—the sort of a day when open fires and kitchen ranges have a decided charm.

And yet there were many folk upon the broad dripping avenues and the wind-swept side streets. For in the city work goes on as usual, no matter how unpleasant the weather may be. There were men in tight-buttoned coats, and women in mackintoshes. There were small hurrying boys, and young girls with damp slippered feet—for the modern girl is wont to disdain rubbers! And there were many others, all hastening—in the way of business—toward some none too-certain refuge from the weather.

I, too, was out upon the street. I, too, was hurrying to keep a business appointment. My heavy jacket was buttoned close to my throat, and my umbrella was held low over my head. Despite the rain I did not feel very wet or uncomfortable. I was almost smiling, I think, when the wind—taking advantage of my apparent security—swept suddenly upon me and wrenched the umbrella from my unsuspecting hand. Before I could capture it, it had danced away from me, into the middle of the street. And as I darted after it the wind—not quite satisfied—gave one more naughty puff. And the umbrella, eluding my eager hand, found a lodging place between the heavy

YOUR BOOK AND MINE

wheels of a passing motor truck. There was a slight grinding noise and, as the truck went on its way, all unknowing, I saw that my umbrella had been reduced to a bent wire or two, a broken wooden handle, and a few fragments of black silk.

There was nothing to do but buy a new umbrella, for the gray sheets of rain were doing really terrible things to my hat and jacket. Without more ado I turned from the wreck in the middle of the street and scurried into a nearby shop. And there, pausing in front of a counter, I made known my wants.

The clerk behind the counter was a young girl with pink cheeks, and the star dust of dreams in her clear blue eyes. It seemed to me, as I glanced at her, that she should be doing something more colorful and vivid than the mere selling of umbrellas. She had all of the clean romance and freshness of springtime about her. And umbrellas, at best, are not exciting! And yet, in just a very few minutes, I found that I had made a mistake. For selling umbrellas, to her, was not a stupid profession. She made it real and beautiful by the power of her imagination.

"Do you know," she said to me, and her voice was the most cheerful thing that I had listened to for many a day, "do you know—I wish you wouldn't buy a *black* umbrella!"

I had asked for a black umbrella. I have always asked for black umbrellas, quite as a matter of habit. No other clerk had ever suggested any change. So it was not strange that the girl's suggestion—if it could be called a suggestion—came as a complete surprise to me.

RAINY-WEATHER CLOTHES

“Just why,” I asked her, “do you wish that I wouldn’t buy a black umbrella?”

The girl smiled up at me, and a tiny dimple flickered, for an instant, in one of her pink cheeks.

“I don’t like black umbrellas,” she told me, “I don’t like black umbrellas *at all!* I hate to sell ’em! I’d almost rather sell no umbrellas than black ones. Rainy days are dreary enough, goodness knows, without black things. And yet people always wear dark old clothes on rainy days and almost all of them buy dark old umbrellas—just as you were going to buy one!”

I couldn’t help laughing softly. But I wasn’t laughing *at* the girl—I was laughing *with* her.

“What shall I buy?” I questioned, “since I don’t want to hurt your feelings—what shall I buy?”

All at once the girl was childishly eager.

“Buy a red umbrella,” she told me, “or a green one, or a purple one. They don’t cost a bit more than the black umbrellas, and they’re much prettier! Why, just seeing a gay umbrella opened up on the street makes the whole world seem brighter and happier. Rainy-day things—clothes and hats and neckties and umbrellas—should be cheerful enough to make folks forget all about the weather!”

I compromised on a purple umbrella. I paid for it with a sensation of utter recklessness, and said good-bye to the pink-cheeked little clerk, and went out again into the street. And with a feeling of extreme self-consciousness (for I have owned black umbrellas all my life!) I opened it up for the world to gaze upon. And then—because I had suddenly remembered my business appointment—I hurried on.

YOUR BOOK AND MINE

The purple umbrella was bright. And pretty, too. It made a pleasant little reflection upon the wet sidewalk—a wee lavender colored reflection that scurried in front of me like a small bit of rainbow. In all the sea of moving black umbrellas it was the only light spot—the only cheerful color note. It made me vaguely happy—curiously proud. I felt like a little girl-child with her first pink sash. I felt as a small boy feels when somebody has given him a puppy dog for his very own! I think that I made a better impression, when I finally kept my appointment, because of that feeling. I think that I felt stronger and healthier because of it. I almost think that the other people—the strangers who passed me by on the street—were aware of my happiness.

And so—because in my own case it has proven true—I can't help thinking that the little clerk was right. Rainy-weather clothes should be gay clothes—cheerful clothes! We shouldn't put on our oldest, saddest garments because the sky is hidden from us by storm clouds and there is a heavy wind and a chilling rain. We should wear a bit of brave color to offset the cheerlessness of the day.

Rainy weather happens every so often—it can't be avoided. Every so often we must have our unpleasant times. Sometimes the rainy weather is one of nature's stormy days and sometimes it's a rainy day of the spirit. Sometimes the rainy day comes in the form of a soul-stirring conflict—sometimes it comes in the shape of great trouble and stress and despair.

If it's one of nature's rainy days we do the natural thing—we get out storm clothes and umbrellas. And if it's one of the other kind of rainy days we do approximately the same thing. We get out those defences—mental

RAINY-WEATHER CLOTHES

and physical and spiritual—that we hope will protect us most efficiently from the storm.

Usually our rainy-day clothes are dark colored. For the most part the umbrellas that we carry, to ward off the sheets of gray water, are black ones. And the defences that we have to protect us from the other sort of rainy day are usually sober ones, of no particularly vivid hue. Oftentimes the very bravery of us is a sad-eyed, straight-lipped bravery! And—friends of mine—that isn't the best sort of bravery.

When it's raining—the real sort of rain—and we have to go out, away from the fireside and the easy chair, let's make our rain-day clothes as cheerful as possible. Let's carry a bright umbrella, or pin on a knot of ribbon, or tuck a flower into the lapel of our coats. And when we're meeting the other kind of a storm let's clothe our spirits, and our hearts, in the gayest of colors. Let's meet our rainy days with a smile and a snatch of song and a glad word!

HURDY-GURDY

Broken tunes, and rusty tunes, and tired tunes together,
Packed into a little box that travels through the city—
Tunes that seem as sultry as the early summer weather,
Songs of love, and songs of home, and songs of hate
and pity!

How the children flock to it, tattered dresses flying,
Tiny feet in ragged shoes that dance because they must;
Music in the weary slums, where dreams are slowly dying,
Where the air is thick with heat and hopelessness and
dust. . . .

Music in the better streets—the organ man is eager
As he doffs his greasy cap to catch a chance coin, tossed;
Music in the better streets, the price of it is meagre,
Old songs, and new songs, and songs the heart has lost!

Here a white haired man has paused—“*Dixie*,” “*Annie
Lourie*”—

There a smiling girl looks down, from a window high.
Just because a thread of song has murmured love’s old
story;
Melody for everyone, for all the world to buy!

Music in a little box, sorry tunes and mad ones,
Swept across the city through the early summer weather;
Merry songs for happy hearts, and wistful songs for sad
ones—

*Broken tunes, and rusty tunes, and laughing tunes
together!*

TO A LITTLE PINE TREE—IN WINTER

TO A LITTLE PINE TREE—IN WINTER

I think you were a princess, long ago,
Before you ever were a little tree;
The way you wear your silver cloak of snow,
Seems very regal, very grand, to me.
You stand so slenderly against the sky,
As if the clouds might crown your graceful head;
You never bow when winter winds brush by,
Among the other trees, so brown and dead.

I think you were a princess, long ago,
A pretty princess with a kindly heart—
The tiny, lonesome sparrows seem to know
A comfort in your branches . . . Quite apart
From all the forest do you stand, far under
The frozen ground, where only roots belong,
I think you keep a singing soul, I wonder
If wistful woodland creatures hear your song?

I think you were a princess, long ago,
Your branches are like arms as they reach out,
In stately greeting to the earth below,
Your loveliness is free of care or doubt.
Do you stand dreaming through the frosty hours?
You seem so unconcerned, so poised yet free—
I see you in a throne room, sweet with flowers,
Before you ever were a little tree!

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DAGUERRETYPE

Her skirts of muslin, stiffly starched,
 Were spread by careful hands, just so—
Her worried little brows are ached,
 Her lips are like a cupid's bow
Yet tremulous, as if afraid
 To smile or speak, her eyes are wide,
Her hair is plaited in a braid
 Two inches broad, and ribbon-tied.

She wears her eight years solemnly,
 This little girl of yesterday—
And yet her sweetness touches me,
 Though half a century away.
Her satin sash, her tasseled shoes,
 Her fine ribbed stockings, white as milk;
And I can almost see her choose,
 Her petticoat of china silk!

Framed in a tarnished band of gilt,
 She sits all day, her small hands hold
A flower that will never wilt—
 Dear little girl, so young, so old!
Her skirts of muslin, wrinkleless,
 Were spread by careful hands, just so—
Her thoughts my mind can never guess,
 Her lips are like a cupid's bow.

THERE'S NOTHING SO SWEET

THERE'S NOTHING SO SWEET

There's nothing so sweet as a baby's mouth,
And a baby's dimpled hand,
There's nothing so dear as a baby's tear
When a smile comes creeping after—
There's nothing so blue as a baby's eyes,
For they hold the light of the soul's sun-rise,
And there's nothing so gay, in all the land,
As a baby's first, shy laughter !

YOUR BOOK AND MINE

A BOOK OF VERSES

The book is such a joyous thing, I think that it was made
In some high-raftered, happy room where little sunbeams
played ;

I think that breezes blew about, and flowers in a vase
Glanced up, with winsome blossom smiles, into the poet's
face.

The book holds not a thought of pain or bitterness or
dread,

The verses are as light as foam, they seem to skip ahead
From page to page, half laughingly, as tiny children play—
And yet they take the reader to a land of far away.

A very pleasant land it is, where every worker sings,
Where sea-gulls skim along the shore on broad extended
wings—

Where forests are a drowsy green, and fields a golden
brown,

Where white church spires reach to God from every
peaceful town.

The book is not a masterpiece—its life may not be long,
It is a breath of mignonette, a gentle sigh, a song—
The theme of it is not sublime, yet somehow it imparts,
A bit of gladness that will grow in many weary hearts.

A BOOK OF VERSES

I wonder if the poet knows how much his songs have
 meant,
Because they tell of simple things, of good cheer and
 content;
Because they bring the light of dreams to lonely souls,
 and sad?
I hope he knows—and, oh, I hope the knowledge makes
 him glad!

IN A SHOP WINDOW

He was such a tiny puppy, in the window of a shop,
And his wistful eyes looked at you, and they begged you
 please to stop
And buy him—for a window's awful lonesome, and folk
 pass,
And they make strange, ugly faces and rap sharply on the
 glass.

He was such a little beggar, and his paws were soft and
 wide,
And he had a way of standing with his head held on one
 side,
And his mouth just slightly open, and he almost seemed
 to cry
“Take me from this horrid window, 'cause I'm ready,
 'most, to die!”

He put real knots in your heart strings, made you want
 to break away
From the lease you signed so proudly—was it only yester-
 day?
Said that dogs were not admitted . . . he was not a dog,
 not yet
Only just a tiny puppy, and his nose was black and wet!
Did you ever think unkindly of a friend you held quite
 dear,
Did you ever speak out crossly, so that by-standers could
 hear,
Did you ever pull a curtain to shut out the laughing day?
That's how you felt—but more so—as you turned and
 walked away!

From a Second-Hand Store

There's an old shop that I visit often, when I'm in a mood to be pleased or entertained or interested. It's a dingy old shop on a dingy old street—one that has stood for many years, and without change, on the same spot. The glass in the broad window of it is blurred, more by age than by the dust that clings so tightly—the counters and show-cases are worn with the print of the hands, with the utter weariness of the elbows that have pressed down upon them. It even seems that the doorsill has responded, tiredly, to the sound of the feet that have crossed it.

The shop is a second-hand shop—it makes no pretence to anything better. All of the goods displayed in it are second-hand—all of its fixtures are second-hand. Even the proprietor—a white-bearded old man who wears a shiny black scull-cap—seems second-hand. And his one clerk—a shade younger, perhaps, but none the less ancient in appearance—seems second-hand, too!

It is mostly jewelry they sell in this shop, jewelry and quite a bit of old silver plate. The jewelry dates back, often, a good many generations—often it recalls the time of the Civil War. It makes one see, in a vision, the hooped skirts of the early sixties; it makes one think of violin music and the sweetness of honey-suckle, sometimes.

When the old proprietor is in a friendly mood—and he usually is in a friendly mood—he can make an hour or two pass very charmingly. He has a way of delving into old cupboards, of pulling out dusty drawers full of the dull

YOUR BOOK AND MINE

glitter of gold and the subdued shine of unpolished silver. He has a way of bringing out quaint rings and brooches, he has a way of telling a story about this locket, or that bracelet!

"This," he'll say, "was give to a young woman by her lover, long ago. She was a great belle, she was—almost a reigning beauty, you might say. Her lover give her this for a birthday gift and they say as she treasured it more than any of her other pretties. She wore it when she went to Lincoln's first reception in the White House. An', later, to her own weddin'. She'd have wore it to her grave, poor lady—" And then he has a way of sighing, and breaking off, very abruptly.

"But," I will remonstrate at a time like this, "but what happened to her? And how did you come by her jewelry? Did she die in great poverty? Or did she lose her most valued possessions? Or were they stolen? How did you get them?"

The old man sighs again, way down in his chest, when I ask my questions. And then, hastily, he reaches for a different trinket and begins to weave a different story about it. And, at the critical time, he breaks off again and leaves me burning with curiosity and wondering—incidentally—whether he has a secret to keep or an extremely vivid imagination. I'm inclined to believe it's imagination—but every once in a while I think that there's a strain of real fact back of the make-believe. All of his stories—every one of his incidents—*might* have happened!

Yes, the proprietor of the shop may, at times, draw upon a secret fund of romance to explain the odd—and sometimes very beautiful—objects that he has for sale. But whether his stories are true or not, one thing is certain.

And that is his keen appreciation of the loveliness of his wares, the real joy that he takes in handling his treasures! He is quite different from the men who work amid the glittering wealth of modern jewelry stores—his stock is not treated casually, and as a matter of dollars and cents. The second-hand finery that he disposes of seems to hold a very real personality for him. And a decided, extremely poignant, charm.

“I’d rather work among second-hand things,” he told me once, “than with the costliest jewels on the market. I don’t envy folks that own big places—they don’t get the pleasure that I do out of their work! Second-hand things have *character*! There are stories back of ’em. Sometimes you can almost know what the folks was like that they belonged to. Sometimes it’s like talking with those folks, just to hold the things they was fond of!

“There’s lots of people in the world who don’t take no stock in things that ain’t *new*. I’ve seen folks turn up their nose at my shop, so I have! ‘Don’t you carry any new goods?’ they’ll ask. And, ‘We don’t want a lot of old junk!’ they’ll tell me. But they can’t hurt my feelings. For I know that they’re just the sort of folks that don’t—that can’t—understand!

“New things are good—don’t misunderstand me. But second-hand things aren’t worthless just because they’ve been used. Sometimes they’re better—more seasoned, sort of—on account of the using!”

Second-hand things—yes, they’re often as good, and many times they’re far better, than new things. Just because they’re second-hand they shouldn’t be discarded. Just because they’re second-hand they shouldn’t be laid upon the shelf!

YOUR BOOK AND MINE

Mothers, for instance, and fathers, and grandparents. They don't belong to the younger generation, perhaps, but they have the joys of the younger generation at heart. They can understand and appreciate the happiness and the misery of youth all the more keenly because they have gone past youth. It always hurts to see them pushed aside—it's real physical pain to see them being ignored and left out. Remember that!

There was a time when fine old mahogany was piled away in the wood-shed, and imitation oak furniture was given the place of honor in the parlor—because it was new! But after the newness had worn off the oak, furniture folk would see that it wasn't worth much—and that the old mahogany in the wood-shed was still good and beautiful. All it needed was a little polishing—a wee bit of attention to bring out its loveliness. And yet—after all—it was second-hand!

Jewelry that has been worn is just as graceful—just as much of a decoration, as new jewelry. And often it has more distinction. . . Old, lustrous furniture will outlast all your modern morris chairs and mission wood—don't, if you have any, part with a stick of it!

And the older people—bless them—the parents and the grandparents have the wearing qualities of the mahogany furniture and the fine second-hand jewelry. Don't, because they're older, put them in the background! Every year that brings age also brings an added value!

SPANISH FAN

SPANISH FAN

The mystery of olden Spain
Is hid behind the lace of you,
Eyes that have vanquished din Madrid,
Have smiled above the face of you.

So wide you are, with painted knots
Of roses, such as never grew,
And, oh, your perfumed witchery,
So old, and yet so ever new!

Transparencies that veil and hide
An elfin, fragrant, tender mirth,
As eerie as the crescent moon,
That hangs above a slender earth.

A garden spot, a song, a kiss,
Forgotten, fragile ecstasy;
A dagger sheathed in shining silk,
A dove that struggles to be free . . .

The romance of another world,
Is hid behind the face of you;
Emotions just as gossamer,
As the fine textured lace of you!

YOUR BOOK AND MINE

WHEN YOU ARE SILENT

Sometimes, when you sit silently in the gloaming,
When laughter has died from your lips, and your eyes
are sad;
When, through the dusk, the soul of you goes a-roaming,
I think of you as a wistful little lad.
Not as a man who can set my heart to singing,
Not as a lover, to make my pulses beat—
But as a child, with fears that he is bringing,
Swift to the one who can make his pathway sweet!

Often I long to touch, with my tender fingers,
A lock of hair that is ruffled upon your head;
And I forget that a thread of silver lingers,
Telling, poignantly, of the years long dead!
All of the mother in me is awake, and speaking,
But there is scarcely a word that I can say;
*Dear little boy of my heart, what are you seeking—
Why do you wander so far, so far away?*

CUPID WEATHER

CUPID WEATHER

*Silver hearts and gold hearts and crimson hearts together,
Whole hearts and broken hearts—for this is Cupid
weather!*

*Roses in a little wreath, forget-me-nots of blue,
Silver hearts and gold hearts, and all of them for you!*

Tiny girls with noses pressed against the window pane,
Waiting for the postman to make his rounds again;
Big girls with wistful eyes, and lips of eager red,
Thinking all the wonder words that Valentines have said!

Little boys with envelopes held tight in chubby fists,
Old folk, looking back, through tear entangled mists;
Young folk standing hand in hand, youth and love together,
Hearts that sing a new-old song—for this is Cupid
weather!

Valentines, valentines—flowers laid away,
Breathing, with their fragrant dust, the dreams of yes-
terday;
Purple dreams, and pink dreams, and dreams of faded
brown,
Dreams of twilit country lanes, and other dreams of
town . . .

Singing birds and sighing winds and words left half
unsaid,
Take the love that comes today—today will soon be dead!
Valentines, valentines—sweet as April rain,
Spread across a tired world to hide away its pain.

YOUR BOOK AND MINE

*Silver hearts and gold hearts, all entwined together,
Whole hearts and broken hearts—for this is Cupid
weather!*

*Misty sprays of mignonette, roses mixed with rue,
Silver hearts and gold hearts, and all of them for you!*

AN OLD SILHOUETTE

AN OLD SILHOUETTE

A slip of sombre paper fashioned primly
Into the semblance of a young girl's face;
Set on a neck that rises strongly, slimly
From out a quaintly fluted frill of lace,
Long lashes, sweeping down in wistful fashion,
A short, straight nose, and lips that almost smile;
An echo of youth's pride, and hope, and passion,
And of youth's joy that stays so short a while!

A slip of paper—just a veiled suggestion,
Of all that might have been so long ago;
A fragile shell, a softly whispered question,
An answer that our hearts may never know . . .
A hint of laughter, sweet as springtime rain,
A shadow, reaching over years of pain!

Reaching Toward the Sun

We New Yorkers seldom have gardens—unless we have a great deal of money. For it takes a great deal of money, in this crowded city, to own even the tiniest bit of a grass plot. But we love gardens, most of us, and that is why we like to imagine that we have plenty of free, open space for sun dials and hollyhocks and rose bushes and pansy beds—why we like to imagine wonderful things, and why we end by having a wee box of geraniums or a pot of jonquils on our widest window-sill.

My garden this spring was a very simple one. It was also small—as small, almost, as a garden *can* be. But it was exceedingly beautiful, for all that it was so small and so simple. I made it by planting a succession of white narcissus bulbs in low porcelain bowls; bulbs so brown and shriveled on the outside that it seemed hardly within the bounds of reason to believe that they bore, inside, a wealth of grace and perfume.

I planted the narcissus bulbs in smooth white pebbles, and moistened them daily with fresh water. And then, to let the roots have a chance at getting strong and healthy, I set the low bowls in a dark place and left them there for nearly a week. And when the week was over I took them out of the dark place, which was a closet, and set them in the sunlight upon *my* widest window-sill.

The roots had taken hold during that dark week. As I wiggled an experimental finger through the loose white pebbles I could feel the strong tug of them. But the small green shoots that had grown out of the shriveled

REACHING TOWARD THE SUN

brownness of the bulbs were slender, fragile things with nothing vivid in their coloring. They looked almost transparent, almost anæmic, when I first placed them in the sunlight.

Narcissus bulbs grow quickly. In almost three weeks from the time of planting, they bear flowers. They grow with such miraculous speed that it is an adventure to watch their daily progress. Every hour, it seems, they have gone onward and upward. And, from the time that they have their introduction to the sun, the color of their leaves becomes more vital, more alive.

I watched over my narcissus bulbs with a joy that folk, who have many flowers, might not understand. I took a personal pride in every shoot; in every gallant bud. Only one thing troubled me about my garden, and that was the fact that my garden would not grow straight up! Every narcissus plant insisted upon curving out over my window-sill, toward the place from which the sunlight came. Every leaf, every bud, and later every blossom pointed first toward the street and then toward the sky.

"They look almost curly," I mourned, surveying them. "Why don't they stand up, stiff and tall, like soldiers? Each shoot has two distinct bends in it."

A man-who-knows-more-about-flowers-than-I-do (doesn't that sound like a long Indian name?) answered me.

"Of course they have two distinct bends in them," he told me in a mildly reproving tone; "they're doing the only natural thing that they could do. If they grew up stiff and straight, as you want them to, they'd be going against all the fixed rules!"

I will always ask a question. "Just why would they be going against the fixed rules?" I asked. "Just why?"

YOUR BOOK AND MINE

The man—I won't add the rest of the long, Indian-sounding title—answered from the height of his superior knowledge.

"You thought," he told me, "when you put the bowls upon the window-sill, that they would have all the sunlight that they needed. You didn't realize that the window-sill from the apartment above threw a partial shade upon your window-sill. You didn't realize—but the flowers did! They knew, *instinctively*, that there was more sunlight to be had if they leaned a little farther out. And so they grew that way. Flowers will always grow toward the sun because they know that they need the sun. They're unlike human beings who grow away from the things that are good for them—that they need!"

Human beings *are* like that, sometimes. They do grow away from the things that they need. Not on purpose, often—not often to be contrary or foolish or obstinate. They grow away from the things they need—the things that will make them better—because they have never learned to reach instinctively, as the flowers reach, toward the Light. They grope along in the shadows, missing the purpose and the glory of things. They are sometimes afraid of bending their backs, sometimes afraid of growing out of place—as my narcissus plants grew. Human beings, sometimes, seem unable to understand the laws of life—as the flowers understand them.

When my flowers were getting their start—growing their firm roots—I put them in a dark, closet place. And there, away from the light, they gained their initial strength, but became pale, unpleasant, undernourished plants. If I had left them in the closet any longer they would have died for want of light.

REACHING TOWARD THE SUN

But I did not leave them in the dark. I took them hurriedly, gladly, out of the shadows and placed them on my widest window-sill. And the sunlight fell upon them like a caress and a prayer. And they, mad with the delight of it, leaned out across the sill; out so far that their stalks were curiously bent. And by leaning out they were able to gain more light, brighter light.

I took great joy in my flowers. And I learned a lesson from them, too. For I could not help comparing them with souls who are brought up in the shadows and who, finally, experience the love of God. As I saw their color brighten, as I saw them become more glorious and vivid, I remembered certain folk who had brightened and become more vivid because of the Light of His love. And as I watched the way that they grew, reaching always toward the sun, I could not help thinking of the ardent Christians that I know, who seem never to have enough of God's brightness—who are always reaching out for more.

THE ROAD TO HAPPINESS

The day was like a golden song, faint touched with white
and blue,
The sky was like a satin screen, with soft smiles peeping
through;
The wind among the wayside trees was very cool and
sweet,
And little daisies, like glad stars, bobbed up around my
feet.

The sunlight hung in folds about, and yellow butterflies
Moved gently through a fragrant haze before my eager
eyes;
I picked a spray of buttercups and pinned them to my
dress,
And then I came upon the road—the road to happiness!

It seemed a humble little road, quite dusty and quite brown,
But grasses grew on either side, and when it crossed a
town
It fairly seemed to skip with joy—the road was glad, I
know,
Because of all the pleasant homes that stood there, row on
row!

It wound about, so easily, past church and hall and school—
It paused beside a tiny spring that bubbled, crystal cool,
Out of a mossy forest spot; it drowsed beneath tall trees,
And listened to the woodland sounds, and whispered to the
breeze.

THE ROAD TO HAPPINESS

How do I know it was the road that leads to happy lands?
Because it brought me to the place where Love, with out-
stretched hands,
Stood waiting for me, and his smile was vivid as the day,
And all the golden world grew still to hear what Love
would say!

CHILD'S PRAYER

I do not know just why the sun
Has gone to rest, why day is done—
I only know the shadows creep,
And God will watch me while I sleep.

I do not know just why I say,
The words that come to hearts that pray—
I only know that close above
My bed is God—and God is love.

I do not know just why the night
Is like a room without a light.
I only know I do not fear—
For God is near—*for God is near!*

A drift of smoke against the far horizon,
The ever changing magic of the sea,
The last glow of the sunset, as it dies on
A quaint, old-fashioned garden's mystery.

A bird in flight, the sound of night winds,
calling,
Among the sleeping branches of dim trees,
The silver rain of April, gently falling,
Oh, inspiration has its birth in these!

HOME

HOME

Never a hearth, perhaps, with its soft light falling
Over the velvet depths of a cosy chair ;
Only an unknown trail and the sea's far calling,
And a keen mist clinging like diamond dust to my hair.
Never a sound of church-bells chiming the hour,
Over the settled calm of a village place ;
Only a perfect love in its rarest flower. . .
That—and your face !

Never the ease of a damask covered table,
Never the laughter of neighbors coming to tea,
Only a climb, for as long as we are able,
Only dim heights that our eyes alone can see.
Never a book of verse in a garden corner,
When a sun-dial catches the western sky's warm shine,
Only a prayer for the weak, and a laugh for the scorner—
Those—and your hand in mine.

Never an oaken door, when the dark comes creeping,
Stoutly barred to shut out the furtive night—
Only the stars to smile on our dreamless sleeping,
And the bow of the moon to give us a silver light.
Never the man-built laws to guard our resting,
Keeping us safe from fancied wrongs or harms ;
Only the freedom of birds, when they are nesting ;
That—and your arms.

YOUR BOOK AND MINE

Never a hearth, perhaps, with its soft light falling
Over the velvet depths of a cosy chair.
Only the voice of romance, ever calling,
Only the rainbow's end, and the treasure there!
Never a shield as we fight through life's stormy weather,
Only the knowledge, as love and living slips,
That we will win to a haven of rest, *together—*
That—and your lips!

VIOLETS IN WINTER

VIOLETS IN WINTER

He was standing on the corner,
In the flurry of the snow,
Selling violets, purple violets,
The wee, fragrant kind that grow
In the meadow, when it's April,
And the ground is damp and sweet,
And the leaves of last year crackle,
Like a laugh beneath the feet.

Oh, it almost seemed like magic,
Just to see them by the way!
Purple violets, purple violets,
On a sorry winter day.
Tired eyed the man who sold them,
Wistful voiced and thinly dressed,
But he held a dream of springtime,
Tightly clasped against his breast.

Whispered words, and threads of longing,
How I heard them through the throng—
Days of sunshine, half forgotten,
Mingled with the sound of song.
Purple violets, purple violets,
Gleaming bravely through the snow—
Dreams for sale, frail dreams of springtime!
(Did the man who sold them know?)

YOUR BOOK AND MINE

VALENTINE

A frill of lacy paper—time yellowed, torn with age—
A knot of faded roses, made dusty by the years,
A verse in fragile writing, a half-forgotten page
Sill marked (a ghost-like marking!) with just a hint of
tears.

A valentine . . . I wonder who wrote it long ago,
I wonder whose slim fingers have touched it silently?
And who—those ghost-like tear drops!—has wept above it
so,
And who has kissed it softly, when no one else might
see?

The ashes of a heart-beat, the phantom of a sigh,
The murmur of a waltz tune, the flutter of a prayer—
A handful of remembrance, of days that have passed by,
The laughter and the love words of folk who are not
there!

I found it in an old chest, dim fragments laid aside,
The frill of lacy paper, the roses and the lines;
They speak to me, a stranger, of love that never died,
They bring to me the message of all life's valentines.

Time yellowed—*ah, youth passes and passion goes with
youth—*

Torn by the touch of fingers, marked with the damp of
tears,
A verse in fragile writing—*but love is strong as truth—*
A dusty little token—a kiss across the years!

Blue Curtains in a Window

There's a window, in the house that stands directly opposite my apartment, that is hung with curtains of a soft blue color. It's a long, narrow, rather old-fashioned window of the French type, with the gleam of fresh white paint around the casing and a dark sill that, seen dimly through the glass, might be mahogany.

During the winter time, when it is very cold and nearly all well-behaved windows are tight-closed, the blue curtains hang with a calm severity of line on either side of the pane. Sometimes, from my apartment, I can see a flicker of warm lamp-light shining between the folds of them—sometimes I can see the ruddy glow of a fire. But when spring comes—when radiant summer is on the way, and nearly all well-behaved windows are left wide open—the blue curtains blow about gaily whenever there is the smallest suggestion of a breeze.

I have never seen any person—any *real* person—standing in the window. But I have imagined many folk—gracious white-haired men and women, and young smiling mothers, and wee youngsters with straight hair cut in bangs across their foreheads. I have imagined the sort of a family that ought to belong to such a pleasant window—I cannot help feeling that only a very lovely person would have chosen curtains of such a wonderful color. I am sure, as I watch them blowing in the breeze, that they shelter

YOUR BOOK AND MINE

happiness—only happiness, and nothing else—from the curious gaze of the passers-by. And often I find the happiness of the home that I cannot see, the home that is hidden from my eyes, reflected in my own heart.

There are other windows on the same block that are not curtained in blue. Indeed, there are some windows that are not curtained at all! Some windows have dingy sills that could never, by any stretch of imagination, resemble mahogany. And some of the casings look as though white paint were an unheard-of luxury. Some of them are quite frankly dirty—some of them seem only unduly careless.

It is hard to imagine that pleasant dream people live back of the dingy, uncurtained windows. There is nothing exciting about them, nothing that thrills the imagination. They are only windows—and most of them need washing. They utterly lack the romance of the blue-curtained one.

When I glance up at these other windows, in passing, I am very apt to see half-filled milk bottles balanced precariously upon the sill, or a rumpled bag of fruit, or a saucer of left-over pudding. And as I go past, hurriedly, I am very apt to imagine that I can hear voices raised in anger, and over-loud laughter, coming from the rooms in back of them.

As a matter of fact, I am probably wrong. The people who live in the uncurtained rooms are doubtless just as charming, just as worth knowing as the people who live back of the blue curtains. But one would never guess it from the exterior. And when one only sees the exterior there is no other way of guessing!

BLUE CURTAINS IN A WINDOW

I have worked with many people, during the years that I have spent in coming to an office. And some of them have been as attractive to look at as the window with the blue curtains, and some of them have been as unpleasing as the other windows—the ones that have no curtains. And I have noticed that the people who are neat and charming and interesting get ahead faster than the people who are a bit untidy and careless.

“I hired my secretary,” I once heard a successful business man say, “because she was wearing such immaculate collar and cuffs when she called to ask for a position. She looked as if she was exceedingly particular about her personal appearance—as if the little things were as important to her as the big things. I couldn’t help feeling that she would keep my work up to the mark; I couldn’t help feeling that my desk and my filing cabinet would be as neat, always, as her collar and cuffs. And so I hired her!”

It’s curious to think of hiring a girl for a responsible position because of her collar and cuffs. But that sort of thing is done over and over again, I fancy, in the business world.

“First of all,” said a woman who is personnel manager of a great factory, “I look into a girl’s eyes. And then I glance quickly at her clothing. And if she meets my eyes and her clothing is neat, I hire her. Lots of shabby girls come to me, and I give work to them! Shabbiness and lack of style don’t mean a thing in my life. All that I demand is that a girl be as clean as possible, that she make the most of herself!”

YOUR BOOK AND MINE

Yes, lots of people—men as well as girls—are hired because they have been clever enough to realize that blue curtains go a great way toward making attractive the window of life. A great many people get on, not only in business but in their social and home lives because they instinctively know the value of a pleasing exterior. And a great many people go through the world with really sterling qualities unrecognized because they hide those qualities behind something that is dingy.

I fancy that it wasn't a great task to make the blue curtains that hang in the window directly opposite my apartment. I fancy that a bit of hemming and a bit of pinning up don't take many minutes. And yet the effect is worth ever so much, for it creates an atmosphere of happiness and peace and—more than that—of real caste.

I imagine that it didn't take a great deal of time, either, for a certain girl to launder the white collar and cuff set that won her a very fine position. But that collar and cuff set suggested, at once, a standard of quality.

Oftentimes, when the sky is blue and glowing, I find myself wondering what lies behind the blue of it—wondering what the Home beyond the sky is like. I can't help feeling that it must be a very marvelous place; it couldn't be anything but wonderful because of the curtains that hang, so gloriously, between it and the world! It's a continuous lesson to us, who have earth windows that should be kept neat, always, and beautiful!

PUSSY WILLOWS

PUSSY WILLOWS

Like smiles from every window,
Of every florist's shop
Like gentle little gestures,
That plead with folk to stop.
Glad as the breeze of springtime,
In coats of silken gray,
The pussy willows beckon,
Across the crowded day.

They mark the joyous season,
Of love-time and of youth—
They flaunt the gallant spirit
Of faith renewed, and truth.
So small, and yet so sturdy,
Demure, yet strangely free—
The romance of a flower,
The straight strength of a tree!

Like laughter in dim places,
Like hope in tired eyes,
They bring, just after winter,
A thrill of glad surprise.
As cuddley as something
Alive and warm and sweet—
They creep, the springtime's vanguard,
Through avenue and street!

PARK TREES

The trees that live in forests are like soldiers, for they
stand
In solid, firm battalions set to guard a well-loved land;
The trees in little villages are prim and slim and neat,
As they gaze in drowsy silence down the candor of each
street.

The trees that stand by rivers are a slender romance book,
They bend to their reflections with an archly smiling look;
The trees that dwell in gardens are like mothers, for they
grow
With their gentle branches shading little plants that bloom
below.

There are trees that grow in meadows, and beside dim,
winding lanes,
There are trees that break the loneliness of dusty, rolling
plains;
There are fruitful trees in orchards—trees are welcome
everywhere—
But the trees that grow in cities are the answer to a
prayer!

In the little parks their shadows are a-dance upon the grass,
And they whisper tiny secrets to the winds that flutter
past,
They tell about the country to the children of the slums—
They murmur through the springtime and they laugh when
summer comes!

PARK TREES

Just a tender bit of beauty, just a winsome touch of green,
Where so little of the beauty of God's out-of-doors is
seen—

Just a word from highest Heaven that the world is fresh
and fair—

Oh, the trees that grow in cities are a promise, and a
prayer!

A SLUM STREET

A woman with a ragged shawl tied underneath her chin,
A bearded man with wistful eyes and weary, dragging
feet;

A pallid child whose twitching hands are small and blue
and thin,
And, like a mist about them all, the sighing of the street.

A sweatshop girl—her shoes are new, her hat a fluff of
lace—

A boy who steals an apple from a push cart by the way,
A cripple wrapped in blankets, with a wizened, world-
old face;

And, where the gutter clogs with mud, two little tots at
play.

An organ man with broken tunes, he mumbles as he goes,
A long-haired student with a book, who hurries for a
car;

A woman in a doorway—in her hands a faded rose,
That came to her, perhaps, from some far place where
gardens are!

A furtive youth with sullen eyes and brown-stained finger
tips,

A woman with a raven wig upon her silvered head;
A mother with her baby's hand pressed tight against her
lips. . . .

And all about them silent dreams, and hopes that long
are dead.

A SLUM STREET

Tall rows of houses, chasm-like, that shut away the sun—
Loud traffic roars that almost drown the sound of tramp-
ing feet,
The heavy damp of twilight when the fevered day is done;
And, over all, the pathos and the passion of the street.

YOUR BOOK AND MINE

WINDOW BOX

Across the street from me I glimpse
The glow of it. It is as gay
As little songs that children sing—
It calls to me through all the day.
The scarlet buds, the trailing vines,
The drowsy-red, half opened flowers,
Are like soft hands to help me through,
The loneliness of tired hours.

I wonder at the folk who tend
The window box. . . . Perhaps they know
That it is like a friendly voice,
To many passers-by, below.
Perhaps they know that people pause,
To gaze at it with lifted eyes;
And dream, awhile, of lovely things,
Of peace and hope and country skies.

The window box across the street—
The sight of it is always new!
It nestles close upon my heart,
As little acts of kindness do.
Sometimes my soul is filled with cheer,
Reflected from across the way—
Sometimes my lips are curved with smiles,
Because the colors are so gay. . . .

COUNTRY ROAD

COUNTRY ROAD

The road is still as my heart is still,
It steals through the hollow and over the hill—
Steals o'er the hill and over the hollow,
Murmuring ever, "Come follow—follow!"

The road is narrow—it is not straight,
Shadows creep over it early and late;
Early and late do the shadows, creeping,
Ease my soul to a peaceful sleeping!

The sumac flames with a scarlet flame,
The soft wind whispers a well-loved name;
The woodbine quivers with crimson fire,
And wakes my eyes to a brave desire!

Youth may die . . . But the road still calls,
To the place where the last pale sunlight falls—
Murmuring ever, with turn and bend,
"Follow me on to the end—the end!"

When You Climb the Hill

I dreamed a curious dream one night, a long time ago. And the memory of it has stayed with me through the years. It's stayed with me so strongly that once I wrote a poem about it—and once I used it as the background for a story. And to-day, because of Mary Harris—of whom I will say more, later—it came back to me again.

The dream, as I said, was a strange one. But it was a simple one, as to construction. It seemed that I was climbing up a steep hill—a long, dusty, tiresome hill. And it seemed that upon the sides of the hill—away from the dust and dirt—there bloomed green little gardens and sweet, cool stretches of lawn. And it seemed that pleasant people called to me from those garden spots, saying:

“Wait a bit—wait! You're going by all the good things of life! You're missing the flowers and the sunshine and the love. You're letting your youth slip away.”

I heard them calling, in my dream. But I didn't answer. For they seemed hardly important enough to answer. Only I kept saying to myself:

“They're silly, asking me to stop. They should realize that I must hurry to the top of the hill. That *I must hurry!*”

The way grew rougher, as I climbed. I could feel the heat of the sun on my uncovered head, and I could feel the bite of sharp stones through my slippers.

WHEN YOU CLIMB THE HILL

There were ledges of rock to be crawled over, and deep ruts in the path. But still I kept on. And as I went up and up the green garden places began to grow smaller and the smooth bits of lawn fell sharply away. And the voices of the calling people became only murmurs in the distance.

I toiled on. And then, suddenly, I began to grow weary. And all at once I thought, with keen longing, of the garden spots that I had passed.

"It would have been nice," I told myself, "to have lingered with the pleasant people down below. But—" I added, "I'm almost at the top. And when I've reached the top I'll have nothing more to do, for the rest of my life, but enjoy gardens! I can always go back to the place I've passed."

So I said, in my dream. And, because of my philosophy, I gritted my teeth and struggled on, up the hill that was now almost unbearably steep. I could feel blisters on my heels, and my head ached, and my tired back was a torment. But I struggled on—and on. And at last I reached the brow of the hill—a gaunt barren spot.

I was tired, so tired, when I reached my destination that I sank down upon the ground. I was too exhausted to feel even a slight degree of triumph. But at last I raised my head wearily and looked about.

Yes, I was at the summit—I had reached the heights that I had toiled for. But everything seemed drab and colorless and shrunken—on the heights. And all at once I wanted the gardens that I had passed so carelessly. And I glanced eagerly down the hillside.

YOUR BOOK AND MINE

But all that I could see was the hard road, winding dustily into the distance. For the garden spots had disappeared—as though some gigantic hand had erased them.

All alone on the summit of the hill I sat. And the sky was dark above me, and I was worn out, and there were no gardens to go back to.

And suddenly, I waked from my dream. And my cheeks were wet with tears.

When Mary Harris called on me recently, I noticed the great change in her. When I first met her, many years ago, I had been a child and she had been a young and radiant woman. And somehow, ever since our initial meeting, I had connected her very name with thoughts of youth and radiance. So the change in her came as a real shock to me.

She was faded, and dull, and gray. She was undeniably old, although she was only a little past forty. And her whole manner was disinterested, listless.

We talked, for awhile, of the commonplaces. She had been the friend of older members of my family—we mentioned them. And then, as conversation drifts, we swung around to her work (for she is a very successful business woman) and to mine:

“You’ve gone ahead so fast, Miss Harris,” I ventured. “You’ve reached the big things sooner than most people.”

Mary Harris laughed, a hard little laugh.

“Yes,” she said. “I’ve reached the big things—at forty-one. But I almost wish that I hadn’t gotten to the top so soon. Don’t——” suddenly her voice was intense, passionate, “don’t make my mistake!”

WHEN YOU CLIMB THE HILL

I, somehow, did not want to ask questions. But my curiosity got the better of my delicacy.

"What mistakes have you made?" I asked.

And Mary Harris told me.

It was a commonplace story that she told me, rather. And the dull tone of her voice made it even more commonplace. There were no high spots in the narrative, no moments of climax.

As a girl she had been absorbed with the idea of carving out a future, a career, for herself. She had been obsessed with the thought of doing something worth while, something big. She had talked of it, dreamed of it, prayed about it. And at last a business opportunity, with possibilities, had presented itself.

She had seized the opportunity. And she had thrown herself into the work. She had given up her play times, her moments of recreation, her friends. She had made the business her master—she had become a slave to it.

It is not strange that she made good. You see, she was putting her very life into it. Amazingly she forged ahead, from one position to another, until she had reached an executive office with her name, in gold leaf, upon the door. And then, for the first time, she felt that she could rest.

There had 'been times, during her progress up the hill of business, when she had almost hesitated. Mary Harris told me, in her monotonous voice, of a man who had wanted to marry her; *and she had loved him*. There had been a home in the country that she had contemplated buying. There had been a certain course

of study that she had pondered on, and a trip to Europe, and a chance to do good in the crowded slums. But they would have interfered with her progress.

"They would have held me back," said Mary Harris, "and I didn't want to be held back. So I gave them up. But now——" her voice broke, "now that I've time the opportunities are gone. The man married another girl. And some one else is living in the house. And I'm too old to go to college; I'd be miserable in a class with just *young* women! And I can't interest the slum kiddies—all I know is *business*, and they don't care for business! Oh," she was almost sobbing, "don't try to get ahead so fast that you'll miss all the joy of life!"

In my dream the garden places and the pleasant people had disappeared. In the life of Mary Harris—and in many another life—the garden places disappear just as suddenly, completely!

Of course every one wants to be a success. Everyone wants to climb to the top of the hill! But the wise climber will pause in climbing—will take time to enjoy the garden places; to see God's flowers, and God's green grass—and to know the love that God has put on earth for us.

The wise climber will get to the top of the hill, eventually. And he'll have a real joy of achievement when he gets there.

For there will be warm memories in his heart of garden spots, and youth, and an unwasted springtime!

ENCHANTMENT

ENCHANTMENT

A tangled garden where a sundial stands,
Amid the perfumed dust of fading flowers;
A dim old setting for this love of ours . . .
I hear far voices when you touch my hands,
And when you stoop to kiss my tumbled hair,
I hear a sighing in among the trees,
And, though it may be just the evening breeze,
I almost see somebody standing there!

I almost see the glimmering of white
And filmy garments, where slim branches meet;
I almost hear the stealthy tread of feet—
I touch your arm, for it is nearly night,
And I am frightened in this silent place,
Where ivy twines and subtle mignonette,
Grows in great clusters, where the grass is wet
And the pale moon half fears to show her face.

Forgotten roses, left to bloom alone,
And clematis, turned to a plaintive ghost,
And unnamed blossoms, a wild-growing host,
That clamber over bench and mossy stone.
A fountain that no longer sends a spray,
Of water to the stars, so dim above;
A garden that has played at life and love,
And lives, now, in a dream of yesterday.

YOUR BOOK AND MINE

I wonder if the sundial ever smiled
 Beneath the blue of clear, untroubled skies?
 And if the fountain pool reflected eyes,
The carefree eyes of some glad, laughing child?
I wonder if the garden ever knew,
 When it was very green and fresh and fair,
 The splendor of a romance, living there—
The young-old song that my heart sings to you?

A GUEST ROOM

A GUEST ROOM

The room is such a quiet place,
The high old bed, the easy chair ;
One almost feels a presence there,
One almost sees a smiling face . . .
The windows, hung with frilly lace,
Look out upon a garden fair,
That someone tends with loving care,
There is a subtle, friendly grace,

That almost seems to speak, to tell
One entering the room, that peace
Dwells in the place, with swift release
From worry. And that all is well
That one who enters in will find
A welcome that is warm and kind !

THE WANDERER

Oh, I have sailed the seven seas,
And I have traveled far,
Into the unknown places where
The great adventures are!
I have seen dawn, a scarlet flag,
From mountain peaks unfurled,
And I have felt the hunger of
The lonely, groping world.

Oh, I have known the urge of roads,
That lured my vagrant feet,
And I have blessed the sudden rest
That wanderers find sweet.
My eyes have searched a tropic vale,
To glimpse a passion flower—
And I have felt the jungle's heart
Throb at the twilight hour.

Oh, I have forded streams that swept,
White crested through the night;
And I have followed frozen trails
Blazed by the north star's light.
I have passed dangers, unafraid,
And I have met with pain,
And smiled into the eyes of Hope,
And ventured forth again!

THE WANDERER

The city roars about my soul,
The city binds my hands . . .
But in my heart brave journeys start,
To vivid, unguessed lands.
*Oh, I have sailed the seven seas,
And I have traveled far,
Into the wonder places where
The dreams of romance are!*

HAUNTED HOUSE

The drifting twilight gathers like a dream
 About the little house, its walls of white
 Gleam faintly silver through the coming night—
And, standing all alone, I almost seem
To see vague shadow shapes flit to and fro,
 Past lightless window and through empty door,
 I seem to hear soft steps upon the floor,
And wistful whisperings that come and go.

The tangled garden stands a bit apart,
 And watches with me . . . Brave with fragrant
 flowers
 It tries to smile across the lonely hours,
And yet I think it hides a broken heart.

Once, I am sure there was a sound of laughter,
 In that small house; once children on the stair
 Called to each other—and, perhaps, a pair
Of lovers met upon the porch, and after
The moon came up, a silver bow of glory,
 It shone upon a wee home filled with calm,
 A cottage with a quiet, happy charm,
In which kind lives lived out a gentle story.

The garden, all neglected, feels the lack,
 Of romance and of tender, joy-filled hours,
 And, in and out among the waiting flowers,
Steal ghosts of days that never will come back.

HORIZON

HORIZON

So fragile is the line of it, so threadlike,
Against the rising splendor of the day;
And yet it beckons like slim, luring fingers,
And whispers of the land of far away!

*Oh, all the gold that lived in Spanish galleons,
And all the pearls that lie beneath the strand.
Are just beyond the line of it, as slender
As a pale ribbon in a woman's hand. . . .*

We crowd ambition into packs, we gird us
In rainbow cloaks of valor and of pride,
And answer to the call of it, each striving
To reach that haven on the other side.

And though the path be strewn with stones to stay us,
And though the way be fraught with fear and pain,
And though, sometimes, we leave our hearts behind us,
And though, awhile, we pause for sudden gain—

We never shut our souls against the calling,
We never turn our pleading eyes away,
From that faint thread of silver, ever gleaming
Against the promise of the new-born day!

*Oh, all the gems that sleep in high flung mountains,
And all the wealth with which the earth is lined,
Are safe beyond that thread—for none have crossed it—
With all the dreams the earth-bound never find!*

BITTER-SWEET

Challenging the eager eye, from every florist shop,
Begging, with its red and gold, the passer-by to stop—
Telling of the autumn days, that are so very dear,
Humming such a cherry tune for tired hearts to hear!

Bitter-sweet, the youth of you that lives across the years!
Telling us that love will last, that faith can banish tears.
Telling us that hope may tint the shadowings of pain,
Telling us that, winter past, the spring will come again.

Whispering to lonely souls a story ever new,
Telling sad, discouraged folk that dreams may yet come
true,
Telling us of country lanes, where skies are all a-smile,
Helping us to hold the charm of autumn for awhile.

Tied in little formal knots with wire and with string,
Daring, in the city's haste, to laugh at us, and sing—
Daring, with the winter near, to smile into the skies,
Bringing, with a rainbow mist, the swift tears to our eyes.

Bitter-sweet, the youth of you that lives across the years!
Bitter-sweet, the truth of you, that joy lives after tears;
Bitter-sweet, the voice of you, that conquers joy and pain,
Bitter-sweet, the youth of you, that never comes again!

Write Cheerful Letters

When I came into the office one day the little girl who works in the corner opposite to me was crying. She looked up as I opened the door and gave me a brave attempt at a smile. But, even as she smiled, I saw that her lips were quivering and that her eyes were misting over.

"What's the matter?" I asked quickly—rather too quickly. For it's sometimes indelicate to inquire pointedly into the cause of another person's grief.

The little girl dabbed at her eyes with an absurd bit of a lace handkerchief before she answered. When she spoke, at last, her voice was very shaky.

"I've just had a letter from my sister-in-law," she told me, "my sister-in-law, the wife of my brother who—who died. It was—" her voice broke, "it was a terrible letter. Not," hurriedly, "that my sister-in-law meant to write a terrible letter. She is only very sad and she doesn't understand how such a letter makes me feel!"

"You mean," I questioned, "you mean that she writes disagreeable things to you?"

The little girl brushed her handkerchief again across her eyes.

"No, she doesn't write disagreeable things," she told me, "but she dwells so on our tragedy—on my brother's death and the circumstances surrounding it. She's told me a dozen times about his last day or two, and the last things that he said, and his funeral. Why,"

her voice was pitiful, "why doesn't she tell me about the baby? Why doesn't she tell me about the little pleasant things she is doing? Why doesn't she tell me how she is knitting together, again, the broken threads of her life? Why doesn't she try to write cheerfully?"

There was nothing definite that I could say in answer. I murmured something about being brave, something pitifully inadequate. And then I walked away, over to my desk. And I sat down—and all at once I began to write this article.

I know a girl who is a member of a large and scattered family. She works alone in the city. And her days are linked together by the letters that her loved ones send to her. When she receives a happy letter she goes singing to her work; when they tell her, buoyantly, the small bits of good news she is brave enough to kill a dozen dragons. But when they write dolefully she goes about with sad eyes, and when they complain and worry, her mouth is inclined to droop. Her work doesn't go so well on those days when the worried letters come—she is very ready, on those days, to cry, very ready to let trifles upset her.

"Once," she told me, "I received a letter from my youngest sister. She's married and lives several states away from me. It was a terribly upsetting letter—I imagined all sorts of things when I read it. So, after an hour of deliberation, I asked my employer for leave of absence—without pay—and took the first train for her home. I felt that I couldn't bear to have my little sister feeling so miserable.

WRITE CHEERFUL LETTERS

"After a long, tiresome trip I arrived at the town in which she lived. Filled with a growing anxiety I took a taxi to her home, from the station. You can scarcely imagine my surprise when I walked in, unannounced, upon a merry tea party—with my sister laughingly presiding at the head of the table! Her husband was there—and his greatest trouble seemed to be the loss of a set of tennis that afternoon. And my sister's children, charmingly gowned, were there too. I—I can't tell you how their outrageous calm, how the placid way in which they greeted me, made me feel. Of course, I was glad, terribly glad, that nothing was the matter with any of them. But I was exasperated, too. Perhaps you can understand why.

"When I was alone finally with my sister I asked her point-blank why she had written such a gloomy letter to me. I will never forget her wide-eyed look of innocence as she answered:

"‘Why, Helen,’ she said, ‘I didn’t think that my letter would disturb you! I was a little upset when I wrote it, over a dress that hung badly—my dressmaker isn’t at all careful. You mustn’t jump so at conclusions, Helen. It isn’t good for you!’"

"And so," the girl laughed ruefully up into my sympathetic face, "and so I went back the next day, on another tiresome, dusty train to a desk full of unanswered mail. I suppose I was silly to—as my sister said—jump to conclusions. But I can't help feeling that she wasn't being exactly thoughtful when she wrote that letter!"

Oh, friends of mine, try to write cheerful letters! Don't write unhappily to your dear ones far away—

YOUR BOOK AND MINE

write letters that will make them really glad. Of course, anyone who cares for you is anxious to share your real troubles, to give comfort to you in your hour of trial, to say the helpful word when you need it. Of course any one who loves you would be bitterly hurt if you kept your real difficulties away from him, for love makes a person want to share your dark days as well as your bright ones.

But, when there aren't any *real* sorrows, don't upset another person's life with a recital of small worries and troubles. Remember that the other person cannot help when a dress hangs badly; remember that he can't look across hundreds of miles into the heart of you; remember that he has to take your words at a surface value.

There are times, I know, when it's hard to write bright, newsy letters—there are times when, for no particular reason, things look gray colored and unpleasant. And it's then that it's easiest to write morbid thoughts, it's then that your viewpoint is apt to seem warped and distorted and sad. It's then that the letters you write are dark mirrors that reflect untruthfully the little commonplaces of life.

At such times, it seems to me, it would be better not to write letters. At such times it would be far better for everybody if you ran out of doors and filled yourself full of sunshine and blue sky and fresh air—if you, perhaps, went hard at work on that pile of undarned stockings, or the torn dress that you never found time to mend. It would be better if you read a good book, or baked a pie, or did anything—*but write letters.*

WRITE CHEERFUL LETTERS

Leave the letters for a day when you have happy feelings, and happy things to write about.

Write cheerfully—and tactfully. Write words that will be constructive rather than destructive. When there's good news write it in big letters—and underline it. And when there's bad news leave it out, if you possibly can!

INDIAN SUMMER

The world is very quiet, now,
The weary head of summer rests
Upon the autumn's tranquil breast—
The ripened fruit upon the bough
Is motionless . . . The very air
Seems half afraid to stir, the sky
In which wee, swan-like clouds float by,
Is like a far-off silent prayer.

How can we speak of love, we two,
When earth things seem so far away?
When all the feelings of the day
And its emotions, touch the blue
Of dim eternity? Your hand,
Your eyes, your arms, your very lips
Seem centuries from me, life slips
Without a sound, from where we stand.

Passion is dead, in this calm place;
In autumn can the heart be young?
The dearest songs have all been sung,
Their memory cannot erase
The spell of sleep that holds us here,
A drowsy spell that nature weaves—
And yet, my very soul believes
Your voice when it has called me "dear."

INDIAN SUMMER

When spring, so sweet, has passed us by,
 When all the joyous months have sped,
 When fragrant flower hosts are dead,
And winds of winter soon will cry—
Should we, two pilgrims of stern ways,
 Forget the chill that is to be,
 And find the old, mad mystery
In these last, truce-like, golden days?

WHEN AUTUMN COMES—A PRAYER

When autumn creeps across my life, I pray that I may be
As vivid as a scarlet branch, upon a maple tree—
I pray that I may stand erect, a torch against the sky,
A challenge to each chilling wind that seeks to hurry by.
I pray that I may glow with joy, despite the fact that age,
Is turning, with a wrinkled hand, my closely written page.

When autumn sways across my world, I pray that I may
meet
Its progress with a flashing song of gladness—not defeat!
I pray that I may flame with hope, when other souls are
brown,
And that, still tinted with delight, I softly settle down
Upon a carpet laid for me by all the waiting earth—
I pray that, like a maple branch, I meet the end with mirth!

When autumn fastens on the land, and snow is in the air
I pray that I may understand—and that I may not care,
And that, though evergreens file past, in their own youth-
ful way,
The red and gold that fill my heart may be supremely gay.
I pray that I may fling aloft my challenge and my smile—
Although the gleam of me shall last for such a little while!

WHEN AUTUMN COMES—A PRAYER

When autumn creeps across my life, I pray that I may face
The future like a maple branch, with courage and with
 grace.

I pray that I may be a torch, against the heavy sky,
Though leaves, from all the sleeping wood, are swiftly
 blowing by.

I pray that I may blush for joy—I pray that I may be
As vivid as a scarlet branch upon a maple tree.

To all who have felt the shadow of pain or sadness,
To all who have suffered the bitterness of loss;
To all who have doubted, a moment, the utter wisdom,
That lies in the shade of a grim and blackened cross.
To all who have felt that youth, itself, is pointless,
That age comes swiftly, and speaks with rentless tone;
To all who have grieved for a dream, or an ideal, broken—
And have realized, at last, that they do not grieve *alone*!

A PRAYER FOR MEMORY—ON NEW YEAR'S DAY

A PRAYER FOR MEMORY—
ON NEW YEAR'S DAY

Dear God, as I look down the lane that leads into the past,
I see that just my tiny dreams have been the ones to last—
The wistful hopes, and childish faiths; the gentle, happy
tears,
Glance out at me, all down the lane that leads across the
years.

The first blue sash I ever owned, the violets I found
When April cast her garment down upon the throbbing
ground;
The home of white with vivid blinds, that stood upon a hill,
A golden song of long ago that caused my soul to thrill.

Pale moonlight on the silver snow, and skies star-pierced
and bright,
The rosy glow of dawn against the draperies of night;
And young love's kiss upon my lips, and young love's
shaken voice—
Dear God, these are the things that make a woman's
heart rejoice!

Oh, I have known the urge of life, and I have conquered
loss,
And I have felt my courage rise, as I have touched my
cross;
And I have won sweet victories, and put away despair,
But, God, it is the little things that make the lane so fair!

YOUR BOOK AND MINE

As I look down the lane of time, upon this New Year's
Day,
I pray that you, dear God on High, will never take away,
These happy hours that I have found, these moments I
have met,
And that you'll call me, e'er I grow so old that I'll forget!

Admitting Things

When we were naughty way back in our school days—when we were saucy to teacher, when we passed notes, or whispered to each other, or did any other of the annoying things that children do in school—we were usually punished by being sent out alone to a dreary place known as the cloakroom. I remember it well—for I was sent there many times—as a gray, narrow place with a large variety of coats and mackinaws and jackets hung in soldierly rows upon wooden pegs. There were no windows in the cloakroom, there were no books or pictures to divert the young mind from the ways of repentance. There were not even any chairs—the small sinner was forced to stand in a corner and contemplate, silently, the empty, accusing coats.

One stayed in the cloakroom for varying lengths of time. Sometimes for ten minutes only, one stood in the corner and wondered at the ways of life. But sometimes a child would stay in the cloakroom for the whole of a school session. And sometimes a child would even stay past the session and suffer the disgrace of being “kept in.”

The punishment, in the first place, was meted out—and justly—by the teacher. But the length of the punishment depended upon the child, and upon no one else. For the child was only obliged to stay in the cloakroom until he was sorry—and *was willing to admit it*. The child was only forced to stay in the dim,

narrow closet until he was ready to tell his teacher, in front of the whole school, that he realized his mistakes.

Always, when I was forced to spend time in the cloakroom, I was very soon sorry. Always, after five minutes of self-judgment, I knew, in my own heart, that I was being justly punished. But I have stayed for over an hour in the cloakroom tearfully trying to screw up my courage to the point of a public confession. I have gone, more than once, to the door—and have hurried back to the shelter of the room with its empty cloaks that had no eyes to watch me with, and no ears with which to listen.

As a child I found it easy enough to be sorry. I bitterly regretted my small mistakes, I shed many a salty tear over my apparently unavoidable naughtiness. But I found it hard to admit to outsiders, as readily as I would admit it to my own soul, that I was wrong or naughty. I found it hard to confess, even though I knew that forgiveness would rapidly follow my confession!

I read a story, yesterday, in a certain magazine—the story of a woman who had been the unwilling accessory to a crime. She had had no real part in the wrongdoing—she had only played the rôle that is often a disastrous one, the rôle of innocent bystander. When she learned, through the newspapers, the real meaning of events that had puzzled her, she was appalled and startled. And then the horror of the situation confronted her, and she felt the clutch of panic's hand.

At first she contemplated confessing her part in the affair. She admitted to herself that she had acted fool-

ADMITTING THINGS

ishly, and without sound judgment—that she had been the tool of unscrupulous people who were cleverer than she. But as the panicky sensation grew she decided that she would not tell her part in the affair. She argued to herself that she had been blameless; that she had only used poor judgment. And she told herself that it would be humiliating to confess to the authorities that she had been silly.

It was all right to realize her own deficiencies, all right to admit, to herself, that she had been unwise. But she could not admit to other folk those things that she knew to be true. She was afraid to face their almost certain feeling of contempt, their equally certain ridicule. And because she would not admit it she laid the foundation of one of the most baffling mysteries in the world of crime—a mystery in which she, later, became terribly involved.

I often think, as I look through the daily papers, that there are doubtless many crimes that could be solved if some person were willing to face the notoriety and—perhaps—the laughter of the multitude. I often wonder what sort of a world we'd have if more people were willing to admit to others those things that they do not hesitate to tell to themselves.

I have known a good many professional people—artists, poets, and writers—who, though they know that they turn out good work, refuse to admit it. They know that they are satisfied with what they have accomplished and yet, to the outsider, they display a false modesty. I have asked a good many people, point-blank, whether they thought that they did good work

YOUR BOOK AND MINE

and to date only one has answered me, frankly, and said:

“Yes, I do think that my work is good. If I didn’t think so, I wouldn’t do it!” Only one, out of many, has answered me so, and yet I am sure that many of the people who have answered less honestly would bitterly resent a well-merited criticism from an outsider.

It’s the hardest thing in the world, almost, to admit one’s faults. And curiously, it’s almost as hard to admit one’s virtues. All alone, in a silent cloak-room, admissions come easily, but it’s a very different matter when the world—or some portion of it—is looking on from the sidelines. It’s even hard, sometimes, to admit one’s failings and ambitions to one’s own mother.

But it is not hard to tell a certain Someone all the doubts and the troubles, the failures and the successes. That’s something to remember. And that Someone is always present, always ready to listen to confessions—be they the confessions of a small repentant child, or of a hardened criminal. That Someone is waiting, with an infinite tenderness and a boundless patience—waiting with loving hands outstretched in compassion.

With loving hands outstretched! That’s the thing to remember. The Someone that you should confess to, the Someone that you should talk to, as easily and simply as a child talks to a friend, is not waiting coldly to pass judgment upon you. He is waiting in the silence, with an understanding that is so deep that no explanations are necessary.

A SONG OF MARCH

A SONG OF MARCH

March may be sombre and grey-clad and drear,
March may be shaped of a sob and a tear,
March may be sullen, not given to laughter—
Oh, March may be weary—but April comes after!

Wind storm and snow storm, and slush in the street,
Hail on the window, mud under the feet—
Sighing of tempests, and skies that are sad,
March may be sombre, and grim and grey-clad!

Winter's last flourish, the end of his power,
Ice for a moment and sleet for an hour,
Frost, and the threat of dark clouds over-head—
But April is waiting to reign in his stead!

March is a venomous, angry old age,
Writing a will on a torn, blotted page,
Frowning at youth, and at youth's heedless laughter—
But April is springtime, and April comes after!

WHEN TEARS ARE CLOSE

When tears are close,
There is one line I say—
“The One who cares is not
So far away!”

When all the room of life,
Is dark to me,
I tell myself, “His eyes,
Can always see!”

When hope seems swept away,
And sad I roam,
I whisper—“Peace—His hand,
Will draw me Home!”

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APRIL WIND

APRIL WIND

April came through the window; April came on the
breeze;

Singing a song of springtime, singing of budding trees;
Singing of love in the sunshine and violets dim in the rain,
Singing a song of madness—and lo, we were young again!

So we took out the letters lying ribbon-tied in the chest,
Where we had laid them gently—as folk leave the dead
to rest—

And we read them over together, and our hands were
clasped, and your head

Was very close to my shoulder—very close as we read!

There was a lilting love song (outside the spring winds
blew),

Breathing of dreams and magic—dreams that have all
come true!

There was a spray of lilac—shrivelled and old and grey,
But it was sweet with romance, dear, in the yesterday.

There was a shaken letter—stained with a tear or two—
When we had almost parted, talking as young things do.
There was a word half written, crossed with a scratching
line—

Just half a word but tender, as your warm lips on mine.

YOUR BOOK AND MINE

There was a hope as gentle as rosy dawn on the hill,
(Outside the winds were blowing, and April stood on the
sill—
Stood at the sill of the window) and you smiled into my
eyes,
And the letters scattered between us like frail white but-
terflies.

And all about us was music—a wonderful world-old song,
Singing of spring eternal—and of love that is lifelong—
Singing of love in the sunshine, and violets sweet in the
rain,
Singing a song of madness—and lo, we were young again!

ANSWER

ANSWER

Sometimes, when doubting the presence of love and kindness,

Sometimes, when even my heart has ceased to sing—
Sometimes, when all of my soul is swept with blindness,
When there seems no purpose, no weight, to anything.
Then, when my spirit is stretching its hands for pity,
Reaching dumb hands that are fragile and very weak,
I hear a Voice that rings through the sullen city,
And these are the words that I seem to hear it speak:

*“There is no death, there is no pain, no sorrow,
“Lift your eyes to the brooding skies, and see—
“There is a chance in every new tomorrow,
“There is a way to shape each destiny. . . .
“Always a light will guide your brave endeavor,
“When, through the dark, you seek life’s path again—
“There is no parting—not, at least, forever—
“There is no death, no sorrow, and no pain!”*

AWAKENING

The little blades of grass are coming through
The places where last winter's snow lay deep—
The sky above my head is wide and blue,
Where storm clouds used to sleep.

There is a hint of lilac on the air,
The sun has coaxed away the frost's vague chill;
A breeze sweeps down, and ruffles through my hair,
From the far hill.

Somewhere a bird has built again his nest,
Somewhere a gentle flower will raise its head;
All life is warm again on nature's breast,
Where life was dead.

Springtime has opened, with a golden key,
Still mountain streams and frozen little lakes—
And in the tired, ice-bound heart of me,
An old song wakes!

The Child You Used to Be

The old man raised a hand, wrinkled and gnarled with rheumatism, to his forehead. I thought at first that he was tired—for the gesture was almost one of weariness. But when he lowered his hand, suddenly, I saw that he was smiling.

"A penny for your thoughts," he said, and his voice was jovial, "a new, shiny penny for 'em."

I hesitated. And then—

"A penny wouldn't buy them!" I told him.

The old man chuckled.

"You're bein' tactful," he said, "*I* know. The thoughts weren't worth s' much, like as not, but you're afraid that they'll make me feel bad! You were thinkin' that I'm old—an' tired. Ain't that so?"

I made no denial. Indeed I could feel myself flushing, for I *had* been thinking that he was old and tired.

The old man's chuckle had grown into a laugh. It was reassuringly untired, that laugh.

"I'm not old," he said between spasms of mirth, "why, child, I'm th' youngest thing livin', inside! My hair's white, maybe, an' my eyes are dim. But my heart's standin' on its head, it's that kittenish. My legs may be not so steady and my hands may shake a little mite—but my soul's turning somersaults. I have feelin's that make me want to go fishin' in th' crick, or playin' hooky, or runnin' off to the circus. *I'm not old!*"

There was something so catching in his mirth that I

too, my momentary embarrassment forgotten, was laughing.

"I hope," I told him, "that I'll feel as you do when my hair is white and *my* hands are shaky. What's your recipe for keeping young inside? I'd like to know."

The old man answered me in a voice that was surprisingly serious.

"Always," he told me, "you must fix it so as the little girl you used to be can come back and talk over your yesterdays with you! That's the recipe that I've always used. I have it fixed so as the boy that was me comes most every night, when the sun's goin' down, and tells me things that I've forgotten. He's a strange little boy with big eyes and big ideas an' overalls that are patched pretty much. An' we talk by the hour, we do. Sometimes we go off, together, down the country road for a holiday. The both of us are laughin', usually, when we go. Sometimes," his voice softened rather marvelously, "sometimes I can't help thinkin' it'll be like that when th' end comes—him an' me just going down a country road together—an' both of us laughin'!"

And I could not help feeling that the old man's vision of his passing was a beautiful dream. And my hand rested, for a moment, upon his—which was old and rheumatic and gnarled and not very steady, and we smiled.

The little girl I used to be was a serious child with pigtails and a wide inquiring gaze and knees that were always black and blue. She, like the old man's little boy visitor, *had* large ideas. She felt that she would one day remake a world—that she would some time be

THE CHILD YOU USED TO BE

famous, and queenly, and a glittering success. When she grew up into the woman that is me she realized how very much ideas may shrink. But she also realized that her little dreams and theories and hopes had grown into the shield and lance with which I should fight for my small successes—with which I should shield myself against disappointments and failures.

I have thought, often, of the old man's recipe for keeping young inside—thought rather wistfully, for he has gone on now, down the Country Road. And it's when I'm thinking of him that the little girl comes back to me. And we laugh together over some almost forgotten wee joke, and we mourn the broken doll, and we memorize once more the particularly long and different golden text. And as I go over my yesterdays with her I can feel the joy of childhood creeping into my heart—and the peace of childhood flooding my soul.

Never grow to be so old or so dignified that the little girl or little boy *you* used to be is forced to leave you for keeps! Be young enough and willing enough to welcome back, sometimes, the child that you were. You'll not regret it! For the child that you used to be is a wonder child—the child that you used to be is *yourself*.

And through the eyes of that child you may be permitted to look into the face of truth, and through the maze of make-believes, and past the portals of the land where dreams come true.

ROMANCE LAND

The romance land of Yesterday,
Is sometimes seen through tears,
That make a rainbow, far away,
And veil the sorry years
In mystic colors, silver sweet
With mingled joy and pain;
That hide the roads our pilgrim feet,
May never tread again.

The romance land of Yesterday,
Is gay, sometimes, with mirth,
That lilts like little sprites, at play,
Across the tired earth.
Until the troubles of the hour,
In happy smiles are dressed,
And lonely hearts are all a-flower,
With hopes and joys unguessed.

The romance land of Yesterday,
Is filled with faiths that died,
And some of them are dimly gray,
And some are starry eyed!
And some of them will live once more,
In word, in tender look—
And some of them are verses for
Life's great, immortal book.

ROMANCE LAND

The romance land of Yesterday—
It sometimes, almost, seems
As if our outstretched fingers may
Half touch its vanished dreams!
A broken song, a scrap of lace,
A faded rose, a sigh,
May bring us, swiftly, face to face,
With all that has passed by!

WHEN EASTER COMES

I like to picture Christ who walked beside blue Galilee,
As just a smiling little boy, who loved the ruffled sea—
Who loved the vivid, wide-winged birds, the sunlight, and
the flowers,
Who loved the twilight's gentleness, and night's star-
studded hours.

He did not dream of fear or pain, I like to think that he
Felt not a shadowing of dread, of life's sad mystery—
I like to think he did not dream of crosses raised on high,
To stand in grim relief against the thunder of the sky!

Perhaps he gathered violets when spring was on the land,
And carried them to Mary in his tiny dimpled hand;
Perhaps he found a pink lined shell and held it to his ear,
And listened for the voices that all children love to hear.

When Easter comes, and lilies bloom and nature seems to
wake,
I do not like to think of Christ as One men tried to
break. . . .
I like to see him, in my heart, run o'er the silver shore
To where his mother waited him, beside a cottage door!

DECORATION DAY

DECORATION DAY

Where poppies blow across the sea, where green mounds
rise above the plain,
Where tiny star-eyed daisies grow to hide a sad world's
fear and pain;
Where kind skies dream, and breezes croon, and battle
scars are swept away,
Where peace clasps hands with reverence—*there it is*
Decoration Day!

Oh, every hurt will heal in time, as each shorn branch will
bear new flowers,
And lips will learn to laugh again, and hearts will throb
through joyous hours;
And every hero lad will know, who fought for some one
he loved best,
That happiness will come again to pierce the silence of
his rest.

They died, as did the ones before, a singing army to the
last
Upholding all the glowing pride that led the soldiers in
the past;
Upholding all the nation's wealth of high ideals and gal-
lant truth,
They went with eyes and chins raised high, in all the
wonder of their youth!

YOUR BOOK AND MINE

Bull Run and Belleau Wood . . . brave names! Red
Gettysburg and the Argonne—
They met the foe and fought and fell; but, oh, their souls
go marching on;
Go marching on, with soundless tread, across an endless
span of days,
Until they come to homely scenes, and dear, familiar coun-
try ways!

So we should try to smile our faith through tears that fall
like summer rain,
For well we know that poppies blow, that daisies bloom
on field and plain;
That kind skies bend, like mother forms, and battle scars
are swept away—
And that, as peace and prayer clasp hands, our land knows
Decoration Day!

PETITION

PETITION

God grant that I may always know
The beauty of a dream—
And that, when I am called to go
Across life's silver stream
To meet the Great Reality, the sunset's ruddy glow
May paint a dear, remembered road. . . .
God grant that youth-time's gleam
Will cause my heart to lose its load
Of age and toil and woe:
God grant to me a tender dream,
When I am called to go!

A little dream . . . a cottage door,
And roses sweet with rain,
And sunlight dancing on the floor,
And love as keen as pain.
A little dream of mignonette,
And hands that touch my hair,
And laughter, soft as vain regret,
And eyes that find me fair.

A simple dream of simple things,
A dress of drowsy blue,
A vivid yellow bird that sings . . .
And, oh, the voice of you!
A dream of silences that cry,
And words left half unsaid;
A dream of hopes that never die,
And fears that long are dead.

YOUR BOOK AND MINE

God, in Your own far Heaven place,
This is the prayer I make—
When you have shown, at last, Your Face
And bid the sleeper wake,
Let me remember, *if I may,*
The dream that was my yesterday!

Frosted Glass

In a room where I do much of my work they have torn down a dark mahogany partition that my desk used to stand against. And in its place they have built another partition—one of frosted glass. And I like it so much better than the wood that I used to stare at, whenever I raised my eyes from my typewriter. For the wood was dark, and unchanging, and monotonous. And there wasn't much about it that gave any play to the imagination. But the glass is bright and cheery. And, though I can't see through it any more easily than I could have glanced through the polished surface of the mahogany, the sunlight is able to creep in. And the sparkle of it is like music, sometimes. And sometimes it's as gay as lyric verse.

It's strange how much difference a glass partition makes in an office. The place, before the glass partition was in, had a way of looking dingy, even when it had been just freshly dusted. But now the sunlight, flooding through the frosted glass, doesn't give the dinginess a chance. And the dust, if there ever was any dust, would be almost pretty, I think, in the mellow glow of the happy little sunbeams. I even think that my thoughts are more glad, since the dark partition was taken away. I even think that it is easier to write poetry than sober prose in this room. I wish that all of my work might be done where a glow of

sunlight falls—whenever there's a bit of sunshine to fall—across the prosaic keys of my typewriter!

Of course, as I said before, I can't see anything through the frosted glass. It isn't quite as though the partition were a broad, clear window looking out over a pleasant vista of fields, and farmlands, and stretches of forest. The frosted glass, for all its brightness, is rather mysterious. There's no telling what may be in back of its bright, but blank, spaces. And I find, for that reason, a special fund of amusement. For I can imagine a view—a different view each day, if I will, to fit my changing moods! Sometimes, when the city has been stifled in a mirage-like cloak of heat, I like to imagine that, just beyond the frosted glass, there is a stretch of silver sand, and, just beyond that, a long, foam-crested surface of green waves that reach out, longingly, to the place where the blue sky softly touches the horizon line. I like to imagine one or two stray sea birds; slim gulls that float gracefully in the clear air, dipping, ever so often, down to the shining sea.

And then, on rainy days, when a soft silver light falls through the frosted glass partition, I like to think of the woods—just after a storm. When they are dripping, and violet-tinted, and touched with an eerie romance. I can tell myself, on a dim day, that there's just such a place, lying on the other side of the partition! I can almost feel the raindrops falling on my uncovered head from the low hanging green branches. I can almost feel the ooze of the moss under my feet—but I don't have to worry about head colds and

FROSTED GLASS

rheumatism, for I'm only making believe! I can almost see a stray flower, peeping at me from beneath shielding, broad leaves. And I can almost glimpse, where the branches are least dense, a faint flicker of the clearing sky.

And, on days that are neither hot nor rainy, I can paint any mental picture that most pleases me. It can be a picture of a glorious sunset, all red and gold and purple. It can be a pleasant white farmhouse—the sort of farmhouse that I most enjoy dreaming about. A white one, with green blinds and rambler roses climbing over the pretty door, with its brass knocker and its fanlight. I can imagine snow-capped mountain peaks, and great torrents rushing through canyons. I can imagine hundreds of pictures, and each one is more satisfying than the last!

Sometimes, behind the veil of the frosted glass, when it is a-gleam with the light of the sun, I think of memory pictures, too. Pictures that will always be closest to my heart. Pictures of things that I have enjoyed in the years gone by. Of a thunderstorm that I saw, once, when I was a child. A storm that I witnessed when I was above the clouds, in a very high place on the Catskill mountains. Of a silk dress that a lady, whom I admired very much, once wore. A dress of creamy old silk that was garlanded with plump little wreaths of roses. Sometimes, behind the screen of the frosted glass, I imagine faces that I have loved, and that have gone from me, for a little while. Faces that smile at me, and that I can see, now, only in memory.

YOUR BOOK AND MINE

Somehow the room where I do much of my work seems, to me, a little like life. First of all there is a dark partition. And we can't see through it—we can only hope. There isn't much play for the imagination, and things are apt to seem rather dingy. And then, all at once, the wooden partition is taken away. By some power that may be called experience, or understanding. Some power that comes to us, perhaps, through suffering, through pain. Some power that may drift in with the brightness of a great love. Or a splendid faith and trust. And then life is like a room with frosted glass partitions, through which the sun can shine with an increasing brightness. And though we can't see what lies on the other side of the partition, it is given to us to imagine all manner of lovely vistas. All manner of glorious views. And, sometimes, we can dream that faces smile at us—the dear faces that have become our most blessed memories. And that is the most precious imagining that life can give to us.

And then, at the end, I like to think that the frosted glass partition becomes clear. And that we are permitted to see what *does* lie on the other side, just as we are able to look through a broad window. And I like to think that then our imaginings are made perfect, and that our dreams come true. And that, when we have had our full of gazing, we will find it very easy to push up the partition of *clear* glass, that has miraculously become a window, and step over the low sill to the Other Side.

BACK OF THE SUNSET

BACK OF THE SUNSET

Somewhere, back of the sunset, when the evening shadows
fall,
There is a heart that listens, and answers my own heart's
call . . .
Somewhere kind hands are waiting, a face that is filled
with love
Looks down at me very sweetly from a wonderful Home
above.

Somewhere, back of the sunset, a laugh rings out through
the sky:
Happiness lives there, always—and a peace that will not
die.
Pain and distress and worry, grief and untold despair,
They are passed by—for the sunset sheds only a bright-
ness there.

Somewhere, back of the colors that come at the end of day,
She lives in a land of flowers, and none of them fade
away—
And her fingers flash in the sunlight, and her lips are lovely
with mirth,
And her ears hear the prettiest music that never is heard
on earth!

YOUR BOOK AND MINE

Loneliness, wistfulness, longing—what does she know of
these,
Where the days are tinted with splendor, and the nights
are soft with ease?
Where dreams may be had for the asking, and wishes come
always true,
Where the ground is as green as springtime, and the clouds
are forever blue!

Somewhere, back of the sunset, the prayers that we breathe
shall rise,
And rest, like a kiss that is gentle, on a pair of joy-filled
eyes—
Somewhere, back of the sunset, when the evening shadows
fall,
There is a heart that listens, and answers my own heart's
call!

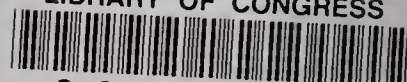
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